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The Director of Central Intelligence

Washington, D.C. 20505

National Intelligence Council

SP - 54/86
31 March 1986
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MEMORANDUM FOR: George Schneider, Assistant Deputy Undersecretary of
Defense, Research and Engineering for Strategic
Aeronautical and Theater Nuclear Systems

FROM: Lawrence K. Gershwin
National Intelligence Officer for Strategic Programs

SUBJECT: 1985 USAF Bomber Study

1. A special intelligence panel was convened in March 1986 to review the 1985 USAF Bomber Study and report to you our findings. The panel was chaired by Lawrence Gershwin, the National Intelligence Officer for Strategic Programs; its members included [redacted] Jack Vorona, [redacted] of the Defense Intelligence Agency, and [redacted] Central Intelligence Agency. [redacted]

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2. The panel concluded that, for the most part, the assumed intelligence threat was essentially consistent with the available intelligence information. Further, the panel observed that the approach taken by the Air Force threat team and the scope of their effort were commendable; their work was comprehensive, reflecting current state-of-the-art intelligence practices and knowledge for this type of problem. However, there was one area in which the threat was, in the panel's view, understated. The potential use of nuclear-armed SA-10s was not included [redacted]

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[redacted] We note, however, that the extent of such usage and the employment tactics are far from clear. Subsequent analysis, performed by the Air Force team in quick response to the panel's concern about this issue and briefed to the panel, suggested that this omission did not have a major effect on the measures of effectiveness used in the study. [redacted]

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3. As the study notes it is not possible to judge with confidence the relative outcome of the interaction between the ECM capability of a penetrating bomber and Soviet ECCM capabilities. The study handled this parametrically. The panel makes the observation that we are seriously concerned about the Soviet's ECCM capabilities and we feel that a prudent

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assumption of less than optimum US ECM effectiveness is warranted; the actual level is unclear. The relative effectiveness of US ECM and Soviet ECCM has a significant impact on penetration capabilities. The Intelligence Community also notes that penetration and survival capabilities are very sensitive to the penetration altitude of bombers and cruise missiles when encountering Soviet air defenses. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] Some Soviet electronic warfare techniques are intended to force penetrators to higher altitudes. [REDACTED]

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4. A factor which is difficult to judge is the extent to which parts of the EW/GCI network could still perform, and the accuracy of the vectoring data it could provide to SAMs and interceptors. [REDACTED]

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5. The panel did not consider itself capable of either supporting or not supporting the ultimate conclusions of the study, given the complexity of the analysis and the limited time available for review. Moreover, we do not consider it appropriate for intelligence officials to judge the conclusions. [REDACTED]

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6. Intelligence information played a vital role in the analysis. There are a few areas where we would have used some different intelligence judgments, but many tradeoffs are always made in preparing a threat input for such a complex problem. More extensive use of nuclear-armed SAMs, for example, would lead to somewhat of a reduction in penetration capability and the number of delivered weapons. However, other threat assumptions were recognized by the study team and our panel as being conservative. [REDACTED]

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7. In the net, as for how these differences would affect the relative capabilities of the two bombers, it appears to us that the effects are likely to offset each other to some degree, and in any case, to be relatively small in the overall context of the results developed by the Air Force. In sum, within the confines of the data and analysis results made available to the full panel, and considering the complexity of such an analysis, we endorse the study's use of intelligence data as representing the best that intelligence can offer at this time. [REDACTED]

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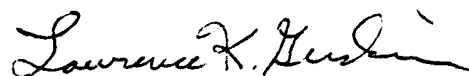
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8. The above judgments are based on the assumption that the final performance characteristics of the ATB and the B-1 and the operational employment practices are consistent with the information provided to the panel. 

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